



50th Anniversary of the first cohort's move to Upminster

September 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the first cohort, namely first and second years, to enter the newly built school in St Mary's Lane, Upminster, as phase one of the amalgamation of Coopers' Company's School from Tredegar Square, Bow, and Coborn School, Bow Road, Mile End. (The following year, 1972, saw the third year moving here, and finally in 1973 the fourth, fifth and sixth formers completed the transition: a mixed Grammar School of 1200 students and 67 teaching staff).

Given current Covid-19 restrictions, celebrations of this milestone have needed to be adjusted, and the school now plans to commemorate the whole school's move in 2023 with a visit by the Worshipful Company of Coopers and an invitation to all students and staff from those early years. Many of you will certainly remember Mr Chris Bivand, Head of Lower School, who has been in touch with us, as have various other former students enquiring about our plans.

We would appreciate emails from any staff or students here at that time who would like to attend this celebratory event, and/or have photos and personal recollections along with interesting and amusing anecdotes that could be displayed on a story board. Please contact Karen Pack/Marilyn Paolino, school archivists - archives@cooperscoborn.co.uk

Some names from the past that you might remember from both schools: Tony Davis (English), Joyce Honner (Music), Neil Findlay (Music), Vivian Bradley (Physical Education), Julian Smith (Geography), Phil Nolle (Art), Kevin Chapman (Geography). These were some of the members of teaching staff who shared their teaching time between Bow and Upminster; many of them would become full-time teachers at the new school.

Reflections from The Cooperian (School Magazine) November 1971

“The first and obvious topic for comment in this issue of ‘The Cooperian’ is the opening of the new school at Upminster. The Coopers’ Company and Coborn School opened its doors on 13th September 1971, and already, housing twelve mixed forms, six in the first year and six in the second year, outnumbers each of the two schools ‘back in London’. The ogre of commuting has been reduced to dwarfish proportions; heads of department occasionally visit Havering for consultation, but there is no feverish daily flitting between Bow and Upminster.”

“The morning of Monday 13th September saw the first pupils enter into the new school in Upminster, an event that marked a new first stage in a development that has already extended over a number of years. Naturally, the purely practical aspects of starting a brand new school are enormous, the first two or three weeks generally being recognized by all concerned as potentially difficult. At first it was easy to become a little apprehensive when it was realized at the staff meeting, held in the week before the beginning of term, that the playgrounds were not complete, there were no proper desks, few chairs, no classroom lockers for books, and, perhaps the worst of all, numerous builders, painters and plasterers trying to put the finishing touches to the buildings. Added to this there were various problems encountered by the subject staff, such as lack of books, little audio visual equipment, and getting to know their way round a new building. Despite these issues Monday the 13th was tackled with verve, the weather was kind, and the second year boys and girls from the two schools in Bow were divided into their new form tutor groups, and ceremoniously led into the new buildings.”

“Many of the staff and pupils who are still in Bow will be joining us in 1973, and therefore it is essential that close contact should exist between the three schools. The very open nature of the buildings and grounds have led to a feeling of relaxation, despite the pressures of work. Although the extensive field cannot yet be used for major sporting activities, it is used by the pupils for break and to a limited degree for P.E. activities. Clearly, the new school is swiftly developing a character and atmosphere of its own, different from those of the two founding schools, but considerably guided by them.”

The following article taken from the Havering Echo, May 12th 1970, records the laying of the foundation stone by Mr Arthur Baron Burn, Chairman of Governors.

School inherits a piece of history

A FOUR-CENTURIES-OLD tradition was highlighted at Upminster on Wednesday when a foundation stone was laid at St. Mary's Lane.

The stone marks the site of the new Coopers' Company and Coborn School.

It was laid by Chairman of the Governors Mr. Arthur Baron Burn. He said that beneath the stone, for posterity, he had placed a copy of The Times, a 50-pence piece and a programme of the ceremony.

The school was formed by an amalgamation of two established grammar schools: They are Coopers' Company school, founded 1536, and Coborn School for Girls, founded 1701.

Coopers', an old City Livery company, was trustee of the school, second oldest in London, since the middle of the sixteenth century.

At the end of last century they

amalgamated with the Prisca Coborn Foundation.

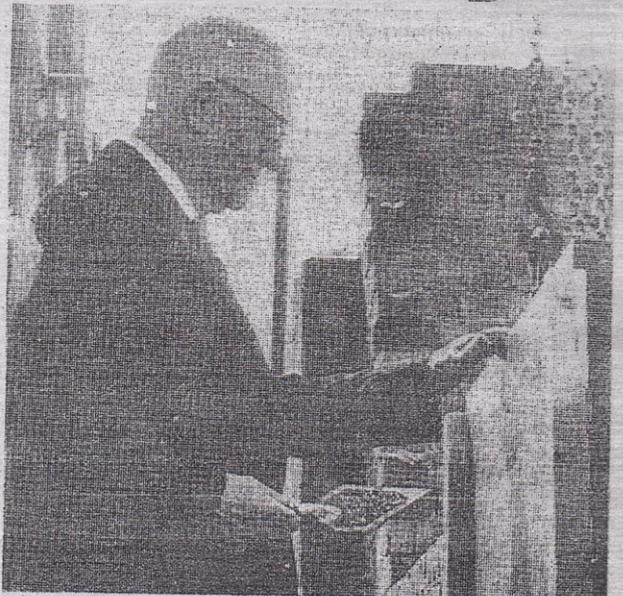
The boys and girls of the two schools, more than a thousand of them, with about 200 in the sixth forms, cover a wide range of subjects. This leads to ordinary, advanced and scholarship level examinations.

The girls, have a strong secretarial sixth-form.

The first part of the new school building in Upminster should open in September 1971. It will stand on a 22-acre site and includes playing fields.

It will incorporate the latest educational ideas.

Those at the ceremony included Alderman Bill Smith, Mayor of Havering; Mr. Wilfred Clarke, Master of Coopers'; Mr. Geoffrey Drain, vice-chairman of the governors; the Rev. Dr. John Griffiths and the Rev. Paul Bowen.



Mr. Arthur Baron Burn, chairman of the governors, holds the silver trowel with which he laid the foundation stone for the new school.



Coborn School pupils Sandra Hutchins, Jill Doveff and Lesley Gearing look at the newly-laid foundation stone.